DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 462 013 FL 027 163

AUTHOR	Cornberg, David
TITLE	Power Languages: The Effects of Internationalization on Taiwan Language Use.
PUB DATE	2000-11-00
NOTE	10p.; Paper presented at the International Symposium and Book Fair on English Teaching (9th, Taipei, Taiwan, November 10-12, 2000).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Chinese; Elementary Secondary Education; *English (Second Language); Foreign Countries; Higher Education; Japanese; *Language Maintenance; *Language Usage; Uncommonly Taught Languages
IDENTIFIERS	*Globalization; *Power; Taiwan (Taipei); Taiwanese

ABSTRACT

This paper examines data from observations of language use in Taiwan (primarily Taipei) made over 12 years. The observations focused on the usage of several languages, including English, Taiwanese, Mandarin, Hakka, and Japanese. The paper introduces a distinction between the possessive power of language and the productive power of language. With this distinction as a lens, changes in language use in Taiwan are then linked to internationalization as a reorganization of traditional values around possession and production. This reorganization signifies realignments of power in the usages of languages whose individual histories in Taiwan join to create new linguistic phenomena that put the language situation in Taiwan at the forefront of global cultural change. With the increasing speed and flexibility of multilingualism within a society whose boundaries become more permeable, more Taiwanese find themselves gaining identities as citizens not just of Taiwan or of East Asia but also of a global civilization. The implications of this phenomenon for English teaching in Taiwan are explored, raising some critical questions for the field of English as a Foreign Language in Taiwan in the 21st century. (SM)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 462 013

Power Languages:
The Effects of Internationalization on Taiwan Language Use

David Cornberg
Independent
dcornbrg@tpts8.seed.net.tw

This paper gathers together a large number of observations of language use in Taiwan made by the author during twelve years of visiting, working and living in Taiwan. The observations were made primarily in Taipei. The observations concern usage of several languages such as English, Taiwanese, Mandarin, Hakka and Japanese. I introduce a distinction between the possessive power of language and the productive power of language. With this distinction as a lens, changes in language use in Taiwan are then linked to internationalization as a reorganization of traditional values around possession and production. This reorganization signifies realignments of power in the usages of languages whose separable histories in Taiwan join to create new linguistic phenomena that put the language situation in Taiwan at the forefront of global cultural change. The increasing speed and flexibility of multilingual use then appears in a society whose boundaries become more permeable as more Taiwanese find themselves gaining identities as citizens not just of Taiwan or of East Asia but of a global civilization. The implications of this wave of change for English teaching in Taiwan are then explored with the purpose of raising some critical questions for the Taiwan field of EFL in the 21st century.

LANGUAGE AND POWER

We begin by considering relationships between language and power. A language can be powerful in many ways:

1. The number of people who use it as a first language;
2. The number of people who use it as a second language;
3. The number of people who use it along with other languages;
4. The quantity and speed of transmission of the language across generations;
5. The preferential use of the language in multi-language situations;
6. The preferential use of the language in international situations, both formal and informal, official and unofficial;
7. The preferential use of the language for institutional proceedings, both spoken and written, such as government, education, military and commerce;
8. The preferential use of the language in creative venues such as poetry, songs, opera, plays, novels, etc.
9. The preferential use of the language in media, electronic communication and data processing;
10. The preferential use of the language in computer software.

Taiwan's history as a linguistic community can be understood in all of these ways from the imposition of Mandarin by Koxinga in the 17th century through the imposition of Japanese by Japan from 1895 to 1945 to the insistence on English as Taiwan's second language from 1949 until the current decade. It is easy to understand that if the children of Taiwan's aboriginal groups decide that their lives are made too difficult by trying to master their aboriginal language

FL027163

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
David Cornberg
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

along with Mandarin, Taiwanese and English, then their aboriginal language will eventually disappear.

I am not a romantic and I am not an antiquarian. I do not think that the past is better than the present. I also do not think that because something is old it is necessarily better than something that is new. My primary research interest is power. Power in relation to languages has to do in part with the resources necessary to insure the persistence of the languages. Languages fail to persist in several ways. For example, natural disaster, famine, disease or war can entirely wipe out a small group and end the existence of its language. Small aboriginal groups can also lose their young people to larger groups with more resources. The young people may choose to learn the language of the larger group rather than the traditional language of their own group. When the last user of the traditional language dies, the language ceases to exist.

The persistence of language through transmission is different than the persistence of language through archiving. In transmission, a younger generation learns a language from an older generation. In archiving, aspects of a language are recorded in some way and preserved in a reproducible format that does not depend on the existence or non-existence of the original language group. In Taiwan, internationalization has brought two different kinds of resources to bear on the persistence of languages. One is the social power of money and prestige. The other is the moral power of human rights. Social power has put Mandarin and English in the forefront of Taiwan's languages. Moral power has focused on Taiwanese as a second or third national language and on the rights of small groups to have, keep and use their traditional languages. The result of the increase in both social and moral power is increasing complexity in Taiwan's language situation. The increase in complexity includes an increase in competition for resources. Competition for resources allows a difference to be made between the possessive power and the productive power of languages.

We may make this difference in the following way. Groups possess languages. Groups reproduce languages. Groups use the languages they possess to produce many of their contributions both to their own members and to members of other groups. The possession of a language is part of a group's power to distinguish, identify and reproduce itself. The possessive power of language is therefore closely connected with the existence and persistence of a specific group of people. But the use of a language in productive activities requires the dedication of certain kinds of resources. Time, space and money are the three most important resources. If parents take the time to teach their language to their children then the language will persist. If groups make space in their linguistic venues for the use of their languages, whether the venues are artistic, educational, governmental, military or commercial, then the languages will persist. If groups regularly use their money for productive activities in their own languages then their languages will persist. However, since all resources, including time, space and money, are finite, increasing insistence on the reproduction of all existing languages inevitably leads to competition for those resources.

This brief introduction to language and power thus connects language persistence through power as possession and power as production to internationalization. We now illuminate this connection by considering internationalization in Taiwan.

LANGUAGE AND INTERNATIONALIZATION

Radiocarbon dating of remains from excavated human living sites in Taiwan suggest that human habitation in some sites may have begun as long ago as 9,000 BC (Chang (2) 511). The earliest inhabitants of these sites near present Taipei are hypothesized to have immigrated from southeast China in waves of expansion from a rapid growth of northern Mongoloid populations around the establishment of sedentary agriculture (Chang (1) 4-9). But by 300 BC these sites, as demonstrated by stratigraphy, had accommodated no less than seven different phases of culture. Those different settlements can be exhaustively described to the limits of physiometric methods in their physical presence. But the culture of each stratum can only be projected on the basis of comparative interpretation with other cultures. In positing this disjunction, I agree with Kwang-Chih Chang's assertion that it "would be foolish to insist, to be sure, that archeological cultures and reconstructed protolanguages must have complete identity, or that the great time depth involved in our archeological work would not allow for a multiplicity of ethnic and linguistic oscillations" (14-15). Between 9,000 BC and today, several other ethnic groups with their distinctive languages came to Taiwan. The northern Lonkius people came from the Arctic regions of ancient Japan. The southern protomalayans came from the tropical regions of ancient Malaysia. The western Hakkas and Haklos came from the temperate and subtropical regions of southern China. From 1624 to 1661 the Dutch occupied the island (Chia 5). In 1628 AD, a severe drought in Fukien Province induced an immigration of thousands of Chinese to Taiwan (Chang 4-9). In 1661, Cheng Chen-Kung (Koxinga) expelled the Dutch and ruled Taiwan for 22 years as a part of China (Chia 13). Under the Treaty of Shimonoseki, Japan ruled Taiwan from 1895 to 1945. By 1950, the end of China's civil war had brought 1-2 million Chinese to Taiwan. From 1950 to the present, the rulers of Taiwan have dedicated more resources to the persistence of English as Taiwan's second national language than to any other language.

Now, what do all these facts have to do with internationalization? First, this brief history throws into sharp relief Taiwan's position as a receiver of languages rather than as a sender. Second, these facts bring severe doubt to any argument against the proposition that some form of Chinese was one of Taiwan's original languages. Third, these facts position English as a relative newcomer that has enjoyed the powers of possession and production in Taiwan for little more than two generations. Fourth, these facts invite a closer examination of what we mean by internationalization.

In a recent article in the Taipei Times, Liao Hsien-Hao, professor of English and comparative literature at National Taiwan University, equated internationalization with globalization (9). He then distinguished between a type of internationalization that includes cultural colonialism and a type that excludes cultural colonialism. In his view, "Western neo-colonialist globalization is almost complete in Taiwan" (9). According to Liao, this situation has rather specific implications for language use in Taiwan:

> If the teaching of the English language in lower grades is implemented with no complementary measures to get students firmly rooted in native cultures, then Taiwan is not far off from becoming another Singapore (where the number of people who can speak Mandarin or other Chinese languages is decreasing) or another Philippines (where English-language cultures have become the single greatest influence in the upper class and the country's native-language cultures are put on the back burner). (9)

In articles in the Taiwan News, three writers, Chuang Wan-Shou, a professor at Taiwan Normal University, Yiunn Wi-Tet, a professor at National Taiwan University, and Lynn Miles, a freelancer, expressed the opinion that Taiwan languages such as Holo (Minnan) and Hakka face extinction (6). These writers credited the Mandarin Promotion Council, set up by the Ministry of

Education under the Kuomintang, with repressive policies that have favored Mandarin as the single national language and degraded all other Taiwan languages. None of the three writers mentioned the promotion of English as a cause of the current situation, but they all insisted that substantial resources must be dedicated to the preservation of the remaining Taiwan languages other than Mandarin and English. Yiunn stated: "Most important are three aspects: distribution of media resources, linguistic reeducation of educational workers, and the research and standardization of our national languages—Holo, Haka and the Micronesian languages." Chuang called for "a national standard phonetic system, and a plan of action capable of being carried out. This action plan must include the reeducation of teachers, perhaps widening the net to include those currently engaged in language and culture. The action plan must also embrace the reediting of linguistic and cultural teaching materials for each language group." And, in Miles opinion, "a language in such wide-spread use as Holo stands in dire jeopardy, unless a commonly agreed-upon written system (phonetic or otherwise) can be adopted."

So, English, English teaching, and English teachers can now be seen in a contested gap between Mandarin, viewed as an imposed version of Chinese, and Taiwan languages, viewed as original and deserving of increased support. But the condition of Taiwan English also leaves much to be desired. We are all aware of the many obstacles faced by Taiwanese who want to achieve high levels of fluency in speaking, reading or writing English without leaving Taiwan. Most of us are also aware that the practice of college students, who are far from mastering English, teaching English to Taiwanese children is part of the promulgation of substandard English across the generations in Taiwan. We also have enough research on the effects of early English instruction in Taiwan to conclude that, no matter how many English language games we put on the computers, the immersion environment required for acquisition of fluency in a foreign language does not exist here for English.

The condition of Taiwan English could be improved by increasing the number and controlling the quality of foreign English teachers. We can imagine a standard for foreign teachers of English in Taiwan that requires, first, that English be their first language, second, that they be trained in EFL, third, that they have taken a certain number and kind of education courses and, fourth, that they have done at least one year of EFL teaching supervised by both Taiwan and foreign veteran EFL teachers. We can also imagine MOE promulgating a standard that requires every public school in Taiwan to have that kind of certified foreign teacher at each grade level of its EFL curriculum. With these standards, the costs of Taiwan EFL programs would greatly increase. Improving Taiwan English would demand more resources.

The question of the relationship between language and internationalization brings us again to the issue of resource allocation. In general, in the process of internationalization, with or without colonialism, languages are either winners or losers. Either they are favored and get the resources for persistence or they are disfavored and eventually disappear. Within the idea of language disappearance is the image of a small, rocky island in the ocean. The island is large enough to support life but not large enough to avoid waves washing things on it away. The island is large enough to harbor small boats but not large enough to influence the weather of neighboring continents. It is large enough to receive many different kinds of waves from abroad but is it large enough to send waves back? Are there, for example, any departments of Taiwanese languages in universities outside of Taiwan—outside of Asia? I don't know but I do know that there are departments of English, German, French and Japanese at universities in Taiwan. Why? This question brings us to the topic of power languages.

POWER LANGUAGES

Power languages have the power of possession and the power of production. Their having those powers is not entirely an accident. Nor can it be attributed entirely to cultural imperialism or neo-colonialism. There is a principle of reciprocity at play in the winning and losing of languages. Taiwan's current language use situation is a good example of this principle. ABCNEWS.com has an internet site that gives profiles of the world's countries. Taiwan's profile reads as follows:

> An island located 100 miles east of mainland China, Taiwan is the victim of a seemingly endless custody battle between China's Communists, who claim Taiwan as a province, and Taiwan's Nationalists, who insist the country is independent. Politics aside, Taiwan is flourishing. The capitalist economy is a leading exporter of electronic goods and is the United States' seventh largest trading partner. Thirty-five years ago Taiwan was a poor, agricultural country that received foreign economic aid. Since then, the country's gross national product has averaged 9 percent annual growth.

Thirty-five years ago takes us back to 1965. But the change of Taiwan from "a poor agricultural country" to a global economic power began in the early 50's when the Kuomintang forged aid agreements with other countries, especially with the United States. The aid relationship with the United States was so successful that in 1965 the US phased out its aid program to Taiwan because Taiwan's economy had reached the "taking off stage...making the Republic of China the first developing country in Asia to graduate from the US aid program" (Furuya 917). By 1976 the people of Taiwan had a standard of living second in Asia only to Japan and Singapore. A part of this change was equalization of income. The average per family income of the top 20% of families in Taiwan in 1953 was 15 times larger than that of the bottom 20%. By 1979 this difference had been decreased to 4.2 times. "This equalization of incomes constitutes a distribution revolution greater than any achieved under socialist or communist auspices and was one of the main policies that fueled high-speed growth" (Hsiung 10).

These are not small achievements. They required the combined efforts of all Taiwanese. But the fact is that most of the official and international talking and writing that have taken place in this now fifty year process of Taiwan development have been in Mandarin Chinese, American and British English, European languages such as French and German, and to a lesser extent in other Asian languages such as Japanese. The talking and writing have usually not been in Min, Hakka, Amis, Atayal, Puyuma or Pazeh. Moreover, on the stage of cultural history, writers in Chinese and English have contributed vast literatures to the education and enjoyment of other human beings. The principle of reciprocity is quite clear here: when languages are used to make contributions that are considered to be of great importance by many people, then great powers of possession and production are returned to those languages. Hence Mandarin Chinese and US English are the two major power languages of contemporary Taiwan.

There is also an element of human choice in the winning and losing that languages experience in internationalization. The complexity of that choice in contemporary Taiwan can be heard in the use of four languages—Mandarin, Taiwanese, Hakka and English—to announce stations on the MRT. It can be heard in the switching of radio talk-show hosts from Mandarin to Taiwanese and back again as the person calling in desires. It can be heard in the flow of a taxi driver's speech from Mandarin to English to Taiwanese and back again. For most of us in Taiwan, who do not have positions of significant power in relation to language use, this

complexity requires flexibility. We have to understand, decide and choose which language to use at what times and in what ways. We have to find ways to accept the fact that almost every day many sentences spoken by living human beings will fly by us without our understanding their meaning. Each one of us is part of the current language situation in Taiwan and each one of us is part of the current language practice, if not the language policy, of this island.

When I first came to Taiwan in August, 1988, I felt comfortable and at home. I felt as though I had been here many times before and that I intuitively understood a great deal of what was going on around me. I was struck by the delight and joy in the eyes of many people when they learned that I was an American. Now, in November, 2000, the situation in Taiwan has changed. The delight and joy have been replaced in most people's eyes with a kind of wary boredom. People are wary and bored now with Americans not only because the Clinton administration has seemed to abandon Taiwan in some ways but also because the impact of US culture on Taiwan has lost its novelty and has begun to appear to many as a burden. We can understand this change positively as a smaller sibling, Taiwan, wanting to come out from under the shadow of a larger sibling, the US. We can understand this change positively as a formerly poor and relatively powerless country wanting to assert the global political and cultural influence that its own economic achievements seem to merit. We can understand this change positively as Taiwan wanting to free itself from the communist/anti-communist conflict between extremists in China and extremists in the US in order to walk its own path as a nation. We can understand this change positively as people in Taiwan wanting to have something they consider their own in their mouths and their ears rather than Mandarin Chinese and English.

But all of this positive understanding does not resolve the issue of resource allocation for language teaching in Taiwan. Is English teaching in Taiwan an endangered species? Not yet. Not yet.

References

"Country Profile: Taiwan." ABCNEWS.com (www.abcnews.go.com/reference/countries/TW.html)

Chang, Kwang-Chih. (1969) *Fengpitou, Tapenkeng, and the Prehistory of Taiwan*. New Haven: Yale UP.

-----. (1963) *The Archaeology of Ancient China*. 3rd ed. New Haven: Yale UP.

Chia, Chungdah, ed. (1973) *China and the Question of Taiwan: Documents and Analysis*. New York: Praeger.

Chuang, Wan-Shou. "Locomotive of Language Movement." *Taiwan News* Thursday (July 6, 2000): 6.

Furuya, Keiji. (1981) *Chiang Kai-Shek: His Life and Times*. New York: St. John's UP.

Hsiung, James C. et al, eds. (1983) *Contemporary Republic of China: The Taiwan Experience, 1950-1980*. New York: The Association for Chinese Studies.

Miles, Lynn. "Begin the Counter-counterrevolution." *Taiwan News* Thursday (July 6, 2000): 6.

Yiunn Wi-Tet. "Language is a Basic Right." *Taiwan News* Thursday (July 6, 2000): 6.

TRANSPARENCY #1

We begin by considering relationships between language and power. A language can be powerful in many ways:

1. The number of people who use it as a first language;
2. The number of people who use it as a second language;
3. The number of people who use it along with other languages;
4. The quantity and speed of transmission of the language across generations;
5. The preferential use of the language in multi-language situations;
6. The preferential use of the language in international situations, both formal and informal, official and unofficial;
7. The preferential use of the language for institutional proceedings, both spoken and written, such as government, education, military and commerce;
8. The preferential use of the language in creative venues such as poetry, songs, opera, plays, novels, etc.
9. The preferential use of the language in media, electronic communication and data processing;
10. The preferential use of the language in computer software.

Radiocarbon dating of remains from excavated human living sites in Taiwan suggest that human habitation in some sites may have begun as long ago as 9,000 BC (Chang (2) 511). The earliest inhabitants of these sites near present Taipei are hypothesized to have immigrated from southeast China in waves of expansion from a rapid growth of northern Mongoloid populations around the establishment of sedentary agriculture (Chang (1) 4-9).

But by 300 BC these sites, as demonstrated by stratigraphy, had accommodated no less than seven different phases of culture. Those different settlements can be exhaustively described to the limits of physiometric methods in their physical presence. But the culture of each stratum can only be projected on the basis of comparative interpretation with other cultures. In positing this disjunction, I agree with Kwang-Chih Chang's assertion that it "would be foolish to insist, to be sure, that archeological cultures and reconstructed protolanguages must have complete identity, or that the great time depth involved in our archeological work would not allow for a multiplicity of ethnic and linguistic oscillations" (14-15).

Between 9,000 BC and today, several other ethnic groups with their distinctive languages came to Taiwan. The northern Lonkius people came from the Arctic regions of ancient Japan. The southern protomalayans came from the tropical regions of ancient Malaysia. The western Hakkas and Haklos came from the temperate and subtropical regions of southern China. From 1624 to 1661 the Dutch occupied the island (Chia 5). In 1628 AD, a severe drought in Fukien Province induced an immigration of thousands of Chinese to Taiwan (Chang 4-9). In 1661, Cheng Chen-Kung (Koxinga) expelled the Dutch and ruled Taiwan for 22 years as a part of China (Chia 13). Under the Treaty of Shimonoseki, Japan ruled Taiwan from 1895 to 1945. By 1950, the end of China's civil war had brought 1-2 million Chinese to Taiwan. From 1950 to the present, the rulers of Taiwan have dedicated more resources to the persistence of English as Taiwan's second national language than to any other language.

TRANSPARENCY #3

The condition of Taiwan English could be improved by increasing the number and controlling the quality of foreign English teachers.

We can imagine a standard for foreign teachers of English in Taiwan that requires, first, that English be their first language, second, that they be trained in EFL, third, that they have taken a certain number and kind of education courses and, fourth, that they have done at least one year of EFL teaching supervised by both Taiwan and foreign veteran EFL teachers.

We can also imagine MOE promulgating a standard that requires every public school in Taiwan to have that kind of certified foreign teacher at each grade level of its EFL curriculum. With these standards, the costs of Taiwan EFL programs would greatly increase. Improving Taiwan English would demand more resources.